



## Research Article

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## Media Exposure, Utilization, Satisfaction, and Need for Service Business Information of Consumers in the Digital Economy Era

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### Abstract

*The objectives of this research were: 1) to study the media exposure, utilization, satisfaction, and need for service business information of consumers in the digital economy era, 2) to examine the relationships between the media exposure, utilization, and satisfaction with service business information of consumers in the digital economy era, and 3) to present the problems, obstacles, and suggestions regarding digital media communication of consumers in the digital economy era. A quantitative survey research method was applied. The sample consisted of 400 consumers in Bangkok, ages 37-50 years, who were exposed to digital media on tourism service businesses, such as websites, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, blogs, and Line. The research tool was a questionnaire, and the statistics used in data analysis were percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Hypothesis testing was done by using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. The results showed that most respondents were female, ages 37-40 years, worked in private companies, and had an average monthly income of 10,001-20,000 baht. The majority of respondents were exposed to YouTube videos and Facebook pages on restaurant service. Service business information was used to satisfy their personal interests. Regarding satisfaction with business information, YouTube was found to be the most interesting form of digital media, whereas the other forms of digital media needed the right content. The observed problem was outdated and unreliable information. The hypothesis testing showed that media exposure behavior was significantly correlated (at 0.05 level) with the media utilization and satisfaction with service business information of customers in the digital economy era. Based on the results, it is suggested that digital media be used in new media convergence and modern marketing for better control of the accuracy and reliability of data in order to ensure that the creation and development of digital media in the service sector is consistent with the digital economic policy of the national government.*

**Keywords:** media exposure, utilization, satisfaction, information needs, service business, consumer, digital economy

### 1. Introduction

In the digital economy, communication is a key driver for success in view of the more intense economic competition. Two important factors of digital economy are trade and investment liberalization and advances in information and communications technology.

Since 2016, digital economy in Thailand has developed as a new economy driven by

innovation, technology, and creativity, taking into account the society and environmental sustainability toward elevating Thailand from “a manufacturing country” to “a country with innovation capacity.” Social and cultural capital, natural resources, and local wisdom have been used as important tools in building economic development capacity through economic reform. According to the Subcommittee on New Economic Reform, National Reform Steering Assembly (2016), the new economic reform covers five main sectors, namely, digital economy, bioeconomy, creative and cultural economy, social economy, and silver economy, as shown in Fig. 1.



**Figure 1:** Digital economy, the new economy of Thailand (reprinted from Digital Economy, the New Economy of Thailand, In: NSTDA, 2016)

Therefore, digital economy plays an important role by applying digital technology to increase the economic efficiency and gross domestic product (GDP) of Thailand. This can be observed in the 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2017-2021), which, based on the concept of “security, prosperity, and sustainability,” aims to achieve a happy and harmonious life for everyone and to promote the concept of reform. Therefore, the economic policy has been pushed to encourage and strengthen entrepreneurs and digital commerce toward expanding the industrial and service sectors and developing the infrastructure of the digital economy. The ultimate goal is to achieve integration of all systems along with increasing revenue, especially in the service sector, which is the main source of revenue for the Thai economy.

Digital economy is the main mechanism of economic competition in the "Thailand 4.0" era, especially in the service business sector. Digital media represent an important tool in business communication strategies toward reaching more target consumers and getting more response and attention. E-commerce is applied in disseminating information, raising awareness, carrying out marketing and sales, stimulating consumer buying behavior, and engaging in public relations toward creating a good image and reputation and strong confidence in a business. These are the main channels for developing more effective communication through digital media in the future. A survey on internet user (digital media) behavior and e-commerce value carried out by the Electronic Transactions Development Agency (ETDA) of the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society found

interesting issues in digital media usage and the service business sector, which is the main source of revenue for the Thai economy. Based on the results, the three most popular forms of social or digital media in Thailand were YouTube (97.1%), Facebook (96.6%), and Line (95.8%). Generation X users, ages 37-52 years, who had high decision-making and purchasing power had an average digital media exposure of about 5 hours daily on workdays and holidays. They also used digital media for online tourism and health services, such as to search for hotels, restaurants, tourist spots, and hospitals.

Reports on the economic condition of service businesses during 2016 – 2017 indicate an increasing trend in the development of this sector. The concept of “Thainess,” combined with the Amazing Thailand Tourism Year, was found to encourage more Thai people to travel within the country. In addition, the ranking of the most profitable service businesses in Thailand showed that tourism was among the top ten. The travel business is a modern concept that is internationally recognized. The success of this business requires the effective utilization of digital media communication and unique strategies as business tools to generate economic revenue (Thansettakij, 2017).

This study therefore focused on the media exposure, utilization, satisfaction, and need for service business information of consumers in the digital economy era. The objectives of this work were: 1) to study the media exposure, utilization, satisfaction, and need for service business information of consumers in the digital economy era, 2) to examine the relationships between the media exposure, utilization, and satisfaction with service business information of consumers in the digital economy era, and 3) to present the problems, obstacles, and suggestions regarding digital media communication of consumers in the digital economy era, toward developing digital media communication strategies in the service business to maximize the benefits of the digital economy and meet the present and future needs of consumers.

## **2. Data Generation**

### *2.1 Literature review*

#### *2.1.1 Digital economy and digital media in service businesses*

The Ministry of Science and Technology (2016) described digital economy as a key driver of the national economy through its use of digital technology to enhance economic performance and increase the GDP so that Thailand can keep up with the modern world economy. The concept originated from knowledge-based economy and creative economy, which aim to increase the economic value of products and services through innovation and creativity.

The concept of economic system management in the digital economy era applies to digital media in the form of digital commerce as the communication medium between businesses, product manufacturers, service providers, and consumers. Selling through an online marketplace or by digital trading can stimulate national economic development toward achieving business success faster.

Digital media refer to communication through the Internet. Social media are forms of communication that focus on the collaboration between sender and receiver through user-generated content (UGC) in the form of audio and visual data. In social media, information can be created and shared in various formats, including letters, images, animation, and audio, among others (Chantrawatanakul & Permpoon, 2014, p. 200). Popular digital media include websites, Facebook, blogs, Instagram, and Line.

Digital media are currently extensively used in businesses, especially in the service sector. Gronroos (1990, pp. 3-17) defined service businesses as intangible activities resulting from the interaction between customers and service personnel, between customers and product manufacturing organizations, or between customers and service systems provided to alleviate customer problems. Kotler (1997), an academic marketer, classified service businesses into four categories: 1) services with actual products and goods, such as car manufacturing and sales; 2) services with accompanying goods, such as restaurants; 3) services with accompanying minor

goods or services, such as airline travel; and 4) pure services, such as babysitting. Communication is therefore essential for service businesses to better reach modern consumers in the fastest, most convenient, and most efficient way.



**Figure 2:** Websites are among the digital media forms used in tourism service businesses. (reprinted from Uthayan Club, In: *Uthayan Club*, n.d., 2017)

### 2.1.2 Media exposure, utilization, satisfaction, and need for service business information

Exposure to digital media provides consumers access to information on service businesses, which can lead to a purchase decision. Klapper (1960) divided the process of media exposure into the following five steps: 1) selective exposure, 2) selective attention 3) selective perception, 4) selective interpretation, and 5) selective retention. In addition, Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974, pp. 19-32) described the uses and gratifications theory as the media exposure of the receiver depends on personal needs or motivation aimed and intended to utilize media to satisfy themselves for various reasons. McComb and Becker (1979) classified satisfaction into four categories, namely, surveillance, decision, discussion, and participation. In addition, Katz, Gurevitch, and Haas (1973, pp. 164-181) added that satisfaction with media exposure consisted of 1) cognitive needs, 2) affective needs, 3) personal integrative needs, 4) social integrative needs, and 5) tension release needs.

## 2.2 Research hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: Media exposure behavior is correlated with the utilization of service business information of consumers in the digital economy era.

Hypothesis 2: Media exposure behavior is correlated with consumer satisfaction with service business information in the digital economy era.

## 2.3 Scope of the study

Digital media: The six most popular online and social media in the digital economy era, namely, websites, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, blogs, and Line, were studied.

Consumers: The sample consisted of Gen X consumers in Bangkok, ages 37-50 years, who were exposed to specified digital media and used digital media of tourism service businesses (Electronic Transactions Development Agency, 2017).

Service business: This study focused only on the tourism service business, which is the main

source of revenue for Thailand.

## 2.4 Research methodology

This study was a quantitative research that applied survey strategies. The sample consisted of 400 consumers in Bangkok, ages 37-50 years (Gen X), who were exposed to and used digital media of tourism service businesses. The sample size was determined according to Yamane (1973) for a population of more than 100,000, with 95% confidence level and  $\pm 5\%$  standard deviation, by using a multistage sampling method. The research tool was a questionnaire with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.89. The data collection took 3 months. The data analysis and processing were carried out by using the SPSS software. The following statistics were used:

1. Descriptive statistics: percentage, mean, and standard deviation
2. Inferential statistics, hypothesis testing, and determination of relationships between variables by using the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 Part 1 Descriptive statistics

#### 3.1.1 Demographic information

Most of the consumers studied were female (55.25%), ages 37-40 years (55.50%), had a bachelor's degree (50.45%), worked in private companies, had an average monthly income of 10,001-20,000 baht (40.34%), and were married (46.75%).

#### 3.1.2 Media exposure, utilization, satisfaction, and need for service business (tourism) information of consumers in the digital economy era

**Media exposure behavior.** Most customers were exposed to digital media daily (average score = 4.70) and almost the whole day (4.48). The most commonly used device was a smartphone (79.50%). Tables 1 and 2 show the forms of digital media and the types of tourism service business that consumers were exposed to and made use of.

**Table 1:** Means and standard deviations for information exposure behavior in tourism service business through digital media (n=400)

Digital media	Mean	Standard deviation	Interpretation
Website	3.42	0.47	High
Facebook	3.47	0.33	High
Instagram	3.22	0.98	Medium
Blog	3.13	1.57	Medium
YouTube	3.61	0.43	High
Line	3.37	1.69	Medium

**\*\*Means:** 1.00-1.80, very low; 1.81-2.60, low; 2.61-3.40, medium; 3.41-4.20, high; 4.21-5.00, very high

Table 1 indicates that the digital media form most consumers were exposed to was YouTube (average score = 3.61), followed by Facebook (3.47) and websites (3.42).

**Table 2:** Number and percentage of each type of tourism business whose consumers use digital media (multiple answers)

Tourism business	Number	Percentage
Tour/Travel agent	101	14.17
Restaurant	197	27.63
Hotel/Accommodation	150	21.04
Southernladden	142	19.92
Nightspot/Tourist attraction	55	7.71
Tourism activities	51	7.15
Others	17	2.38
<b>Total</b>	<b>713</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 2 shows that most consumers used digital media for restaurant services (197, 27.63%), followed by hotel/accommodation (150, 21.04%), and southernladden (142, 19.92%).

**Utilization of service business information.** Consumers were found to have high usage of digital media for tourism business (average score = 3.64). The most popular forms of media were YouTube and Facebook (average score = 4.07), which consumers used for satisfaction of their personal interests and for entertainment. These were followed by websites (average score = 3.82), which were used to compare information with other channels. In addition, customers also used Line (average score = 3.46) to find information to satisfy their personal interests.

**Satisfaction with service business information.** Most consumers were found to be satisfied with the tourism business information provided by digital media in the digital economy era (average score = 3.49). The most popular media form was YouTube (average score = 3.71), followed by websites (3.66) and Facebook (3.53). The satisfaction levels for all digital media were highest for attractiveness.

**Need for service business information.** Consumers were found to have a high level of need for tourism business information through digital media (average score = 3.45). Most consumers required more accurate content on Line (average score = 3.63), as well as on YouTube (3.46) and Facebook (3.42). In addition, consumers needed better access, updated information, and format adjustment, respectively, for both YouTube and Facebook.

**Problems, obstacles, and suggestions for the presentation of tourism business information through digital media in the digital economy era.** The most common problem observed in digital media communication was outdated information, followed by incorrect, unreliable, and incomplete content.

Regarding the presentation of tourism business information, the consumers suggested that the content be improved and updated for accuracy. The images used for advertising or marketing, such as of accommodations, restaurants, tourist attractions, and promotions, should be up-to-date and not misleading. To attract more consumers, there should be an interesting point in the presentation of tourism business information. The results indicated that some media forms presented either too much or too little content, without any interesting point. References to reliable information sources should be included to convince users to use the service. Facebook Live can be used as another digital media form for tourism business in the digital economy era because it is attractive and different from YouTube. The presentation can be done in real time by celebrities, net idols, or tourists to promote travel services. In addition, the presentation can apply storytelling and experience sharing to visualize the actual tourist attractions and attract more consumers, as well as to disseminate information in the online world so as to reach a wide range of target consumers and public groups.

### 3.2 Part 2 Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis 1: Media exposure behavior is correlated with consumer utilization of service business information in the digital economy era.

Hypothesis 2: Media exposure behavior is correlated with consumer satisfaction with service



business information in the digital economy era.

Inferential statistics were used to determine the relationships between variables by applying the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. Table 3 shows the hypothesis testing results.

**Table 3:** Analysis of the relationships between the media exposure behavior, utilization, and satisfaction with service business information (tourism) of consumers in the digital economy era. (n=400)

Utilization and satisfaction with service business information of consumers in the digital economy era	Media exposure behavior		
	r	Sig. (2-tailed)	Significance level
<b>Utilization</b>			
<b>1. Websites</b>			
1.1 As a source of information and to find business information, including tracking and finding new information	0.635	0.002*	correlated
1.2 For entertainment and relaxation	0.752	0.006*	correlated
1.3 As a reliable source of information to exchange with other people	0.319	0.012*	correlated
1.4 To search for comments/user experiences/actual samples	0.481	0.023*	correlated
1.5 To satisfy personal interests	0.764	0.001*	correlated
1.6 To compare information with other channels (for a better understanding of service details)	0.835	0.000*	correlated
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.631</b>	<b>0.007*</b>	<b>correlated</b>
<b>2. Facebook</b>			
2.1 As a source of information and to find business information, including tracking and finding new information	0.682	0.005*	correlated
2.2 For entertainment and relaxation	0.850	0.001*	correlated
2.3 As a reliable source of information to exchange with other people	0.684	0.007*	correlated
2.4 To search for comments/user experiences/actual samples	0.826	0.000*	correlated
2.5 To satisfy personal interests	0.739	0.003*	correlated
2.6 To compare information with other channels (for a better understanding of service details)	0.546	0.006*	correlated
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.723</b>	<b>0.003*</b>	<b>correlated</b>
<b>3. Instagram</b>			
3.1 As a source of information and to find business information, including tracking and finding new information	0.307	0.023*	correlated
3.2 For entertainment and relaxation	0.761	0.006*	correlated
3.3 As a reliable source of information to exchange with other people	0.413	0.019*	correlated
3.4 To search for comments/user experiences/actual samples	0.617	0.005*	correlated
3.5 To satisfy personal interests	0.836	0.001*	correlated
3.6 To compare information with other channels (for a better understanding of service details)	0.030	0.164	not correlated
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.494</b>	<b>0.036*</b>	<b>not correlated</b>
<b>4. Blog</b>			
4.1 As a source of information and to find business information, including tracking and finding new information	0.284	0.010*	correlated
4.2 For entertainment and relaxation	0.286	0.012*	correlated
4.3 As a reliable source of information to exchange with other people	0.417	0.004*	correlated
4.4 To search for comments/user experiences/actual samples	0.741	0.000*	correlated
4.5 To satisfy personal interests	0.524	0.001*	correlated
4.6 To compare information with other channels (for a better understanding of service details)	0.628	0.002*	correlated
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.480</b>	<b>0.004*</b>	<b>not correlated</b>
<b>5. YouTube</b>			
5.1 As a source of information and to find business information, including tracking and finding new information	0.451	0.012*	correlated
5.2 For entertainment and relaxation	0.853	0.000*	correlated
5.3 As a reliable source of information to exchange with other people	0.584	0.002*	correlated
5.4 To search for comments/user experiences/actual samples	0.832	0.001*	correlated
5.5 To satisfy personal interests	0.957	0.001*	correlated
5.6 To compare information with other channels (for a better understanding of service details)	0.665	0.003*	correlated
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.721</b>	<b>0.003*</b>	<b>correlated</b>

Utilization and satisfaction with service business information of consumers in the digital economy era	Media exposure behavior		
	r	Sig. (2-tailed)	Significance level
<b>Utilization</b>			
<b>6. Line</b>			
6.1 As a source of information and to find business information, including tracking and finding new information	0.250	0.002*	correlated
6.2 For entertainment and relaxation	0.654	0.001*	correlated
6.3 As a reliable source of information to exchange with other people	0.044	0.167	not correlated
6.4 To search for comments/user experiences/actual samples	0.435	0.003*	correlated
6.5 To satisfy personal interests	0.358	0.018*	correlated
6.6 To compare information with other channels (for a better understanding of service details)	0.197	0.014*	correlated
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.323</b>	<b>0.034*</b>	<b>correlated</b>
<b>Overall information utilization</b>	<b>0.562</b>	<b>0.014*</b>	<b>correlated</b>
<b>Satisfaction</b>			
<b>1. Websites</b>			
1.1 Accuracy	0.672	0.001*	correlated
1.2 Attractiveness	0.689	0.005*	correlated
1.3 Reliability	0.782	0.000*	correlated
1.4 Modernity of information dissemination	0.058	0.143	not correlated
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.550</b>	<b>0.003*</b>	<b>correlated</b>
<b>2. Facebook</b>			
2.1 Accuracy	0.543	0.002*	correlated
2.2 Attractiveness	0.883	0.000*	correlated
2.3 Reliability	0.644	0.006*	correlated
2.4 Modernity of information dissemination	0.051	0.293	not correlated
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.530</b>	<b>0.000*</b>	<b>correlated</b>
<b>3. Instagram</b>			
3.1 Accuracy	0.417	0.001*	correlated
3.2 Attractiveness	0.645	0.003*	correlated
3.3 Reliability	0.012	0.206	not correlated
3.4 Modernity of information dissemination	0.428	0.022*	correlated
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.375</b>	<b>0.028*</b>	<b>correlated</b>
<b>4. Blog</b>			
4.1 Accuracy	0.727	0.002*	correlated
4.2 Attractiveness	0.625	0.000*	correlated
4.3 Reliability	0.619	0.003*	correlated
4.4 Modernity of information dissemination	0.026	0.301	not correlated
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.499</b>	<b>0.016*</b>	<b>correlated</b>
<b>5. YouTube</b>			
5.1 Accuracy	0.650	0.001*	correlated
5.2 Attractiveness	0.827	0.000*	correlated
5.3 Reliability	0.554	0.003*	correlated
5.4 Modernity of information dissemination	0.556	0.001*	correlated
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.646</b>	<b>0.001*</b>	<b>correlated</b>
<b>6. Line</b>			
6.1 Accuracy	0.010	0.339	not correlated
6.2 Attractiveness	0.678	0.000*	correlated
6.3 Reliability	0.347	0.006*	correlated
6.4 Modernity of information dissemination	0.349	0.003*	correlated
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.346</b>	<b>0.028*</b>	<b>correlated</b>
<b>Overall satisfaction with information</b>	<b>0.491</b>	<b>0.012*</b>	<b>correlated</b>

\*\*Statistically significant at  $p = 0.05$ .

The hypothesis testing results showed that the media exposure behavior of consumers was correlated with their information usage in the digital economy era ( $p = 0.05$ ).

The media exposure behavior of consumers was also correlated with the information satisfaction of consumers in the digital economy era ( $p = 0.05$ ).



## 4. Discussion and Conclusion

### 4.1 Digital media exposure behavior in service business

Gen X consumers were found to be exposed to digital media daily and almost the whole day through their smartphones. This is in accordance with Klapper (1960) who stated that information exposure and perceptions start with selective exposure as the first step in media and information exposure through various information sources in order to satisfy individual needs.

### 4.2 Utilization and satisfaction with service business digital media

The most popular digital media were YouTube and Facebook, which most consumers used to satisfy their personal interests. In addition, consumers also used these digital media for entertainment and relaxation and to search for comments, user experiences, and actual samples. YouTube is an important online marketing tool. YouTube users can update information on product brands and post accompanying photos, as well as promote products and services through advertising video clips, thus making products and services more interesting because both pictures and audio are provided as actual samples (YouTube, 2559).

Nithiuthai (2011) described Facebook as an online social network in which everyone can share opinions, feelings, information, news, pictures, and videos, which can be communicated in effective, convenient, fast, and enjoyable ways. Facebook can be used for both personal and business purposes. This is consistent with the analysis of consumer behaviors by Waicharoen (2015, pp. 11-35), who concluded that consumer behaviors have changed from viewing the actual product before making a purchase to making a purchase without viewing the actual product. Consumers today buy products after merely watching video clips and photos in digital media. This can be explained by the uses and gratifications theory of Blumler and Katz (1974), which states that personal needs or motivations result in expectations for media aimed at and intended to utilize media to satisfy themselves for various reasons.

### 4.3 Need for service business information from digital media in the digital economy era

For digital media, such as Line, websites, and Facebook, there was a higher need for accuracy of content, details, and types of services, modernity of content, reliability, appropriate amount of content, clarity of information, and reliability of information source. This is consistent with Katz et al. (1973), who explained that the receiver needs regarding media and information usage consist of cognitive needs, affective needs, personal integrative needs, social integrative needs, and tension release needs.

### 4.4 Relationships between the media exposure behavior, utilization, and satisfaction with service business information of consumers in the digital economy era

The relationships between media exposure behavior, utilization, and satisfaction were tested at a statistical significance level of  $p = 0.05$ . This is consistent with the uses and gratifications theory, which was classified it into 4 categories according to McComb et al. (1979), who explained that people have media surveillance behavior and will monitor the surrounding situations to be up to date or choose which media to be exposed. This is correlated with the use of utilization and satisfaction in decision-making, discussion, or participation according to personal interests.

### 4.5 Conclusions and suggestions

The present study on the media exposure, utilization, satisfaction, and need for service business information of consumers in the digital economy era indicate that Gen X consumers easily adopt digital media, are interested in digital media exposure to obtain tourism information, and use the services regularly. The author recommends that the advantages of digital media, along with their

fast and convenient access, be used in combination with various marketing strategies to ensure business success in the digital economy era. The results show that Facebook and YouTube are the most popular digital media. The marketing digital multimedia can be used in the businesses but there must be a remarkable difference in selling. Tourism in Thailand is unique and has natural beauty which can meet the information needs and expectation of consumers. In digital media communication, service businesses need to have more control over the marketing information, such as promotions, tour fees, tourist attractions, festivals or seasons, accommodations, and restaurants, to ensure that it is appropriate, reliable, accurate, and updated. In the long term, misleading and erroneous information or propaganda will affect the decision of this consumer group and damage the reputation of the business. Moreover, consumers who are exposed to digital media need to be aware of the media and information for the decision making on using service.

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